(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Information Officers undergo an attachment with the External Pub licity Division before taking up their assignments during the course of which they are briefed and oriented on all aspects of external publicity. These are supplemented by instruc tions from headquarters from time to time.

Transfer Procedure in Central Passport Organisation

7971. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any transfer procedure and norms for the employees and officers in the Central Pas-port Organisation; and

(b) if so, the details therof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Transfer of all the employees belonging to the Central Passport Organisation Cadre is governed by the guidelines drawn for the purpose which were framed in 1993. The main features of the transfer policy then framed are as follows:

(i) Group 'D' staff are not transferred without their consent.

(ii) UDCs and LDCs are transferable after a stay of 5 years at a station. Their transfers are based strictly on, the length of stay at station. Normally these officials are not transferred except, inter alia, on administrative and disciplinary grounds as laid down in the transfer policy.

(iii) Assistants are transferable after a tenure of 3 years at one station. Usually, Assistants are transferred only twice until their promotion to the next higher post of Superintendent.

(iv) Superintendent level-officers are transferable after a tenure of 3 years at one station.

(v) Officers upto the level of Superintendent are transferred within prescribed zones.

(vi) Officers of the rank of PROs. APOs are transferable anywhere in India. Their tenure at one station is usually for 3 years.

(vii) Officers who are within 2 years of their retirement may indicate a preference for a station. Such requests are accommodated as far as possible.

The transfer policy is revised from time to time keeping in view the functional requirements of the Central Passport Organisation as well as the interests of the CPO employees. The last revision of the transfer policy was carried out in 1993.

Casual Labourers Discharging Higher Responsibilities in the Central Passport Organisationt

7972. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that approximately 500 casual labourers are employed in the Central Passport Organisation who discharge the duties of Lower Division Clerks, Upper Division Clerks and Assistants.

(b) if so, the number of such casual labourers presently working in the Central Passport Organisation and since when,

(c) whether the deployment of ca-suarlabour to discharge higher and regular responsibilities is against the policy of Government; and

(d) if so, what steps are being ta ken for regularisation of these ca sual labourers?